



GFAR

GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
FORUM MONDIAL DE LA RECHERCHE AGRICOLE
FORO GLOBAL DE INVESTIGACION AGROPECUARIA

GFAR REPORT TO THE CGIAR AGM 2003

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Since it was founded in 1996, the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) has held its statutory meetings in conjunction with and just prior to the CGIAR Annual General Meeting. This year is no exception because the NARS Sub-Committee, the GFAR Steering Committee and the GFAR Donor Support Group meetings were held here in Nairobi, from October 25th to the 27th. An annual report that comprised activities of the GFAR Secretariat and GFAR stakeholders including the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs) was presented during those meetings. The contribution of the IARCS and in particular the CGIAR centres to the overall GFAR programmes and activities was presented to the GFAR-SC by the Center representative, and was very well received because it highlighted the invaluable contribution of the Centres to the GFAR initiative. I will not repeat those activities here, but will instead like to go down the other lane of a two-lane road and briefly report on the contribution of GFAR to the CGIAR initiative.

Firstly, the GFAR chair as you all know sits on the Executive Committee of the CGIAR, and he has, in this capacity, brought in the perspective of other GFAR stakeholders to the decision-making process of the committee.

Secondly and during the year under review, the GFAR Secretariat and the Interim Science Council (iSC) sitting in the proximity of each other at the FAO in Rome, collaborated on many occasions to advance CGIAR agenda. For example, the GFAR Secretariat participated in a number of brain storming sessions convened by the (iSc) chair to map out an appropriate procedure for carrying out the task of formulating new research priorities and implementation strategies to inform the individual Center, System wide- and Challenge Program decisions on the aggregate CGIAR research. The outcome was a two-step approach which has now been completed, and to which GFAR contributed in the following manner:

- identification and recommendation of participants from the GFAR database of stakeholders to take part in both the stakeholder and scientific panel consultations
- facilitation of a consultative and feedback process to stakeholders during the GFAR 2003 meeting in Dakar
- participation in an examination of step 1 outputs and fine tuning of step 2 by iSC and stakeholders at an iSC convened meeting in June of this year
- invaluable contribution to the output of the exercise which you have had the opportunity to examine and endorse.

Thirdly, the GFAR Secretariat at the request of the CGIAR systems office organized a consultation of its stakeholder, to identify suitable candidates and make appropriate recommendations for representatives of National Research Institutions, Farmers Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations to sit on the re-organized CGIAR Genetic Resources Policy Committee (GRPC.)

Fourthly , GFAR has actively participated at the various stages of the development of the Challenge Programme on Unlocking Genetic Diversity in Crops for the Resource-Poor, to the extent that it was invited to join the Programme Steering Committee of the CP as a full-fledged member. A role that GFAR took seriously as four representatives of GFAR participated actively at the recent Technical Planning Workshop and the Program Steering Committee of the CP held recently in Wageningen, to ensure that the views of its various stakeholders were made known and accommodated. It was recently suggested that a GFAR Stakeholder Committee be established to advise the Programme Steering Committee of the CP and provide a feedback and consultative mechanism to the various ARD stakeholders. The operationalization of this proposed mechanism is currently being examined..

Other CPs have not taken full advantage of the convening power of GFAR, and the expertise it can mobilize. We present below, a table indicating the role GFAR could play at various stages of the development and implementation of CPs, and urge current and future CPs to liaise with the GFAR Secretariat to jointly develop strategies to ensure a stronger role for GFAR in the development and implementation of Challenge Programmes.

Table 1: The role of GFAR in various stages of CP development

<i>Stage of CP Development</i>	<i>Role of GFAR</i>
CP Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation/involvement in Stakeholder Consultation Meetings • Provide inputs by soliciting and synthesizing stakeholder suggestions and comments on the CP proposal • Feedback to stakeholders on the development of the CP
CP Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Program Steering Committee • Articulating the concerns of less represented stakeholders and regions • Feedback to stakeholders on the status of implementation of the CP (mainly through GFAR-SC, NARS and stakeholder representatives) • Participating in specific CP components, particularly cross-cutting ones such as Capacity Building; fostering clear discussions on IPR issues, access to information and the like
CP Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in mobilizing stakeholder participation

GFAR holds its own general meetings only once every three years. The last one was held in Dakar from May 22nd to the 24th. The goal of the conference was to review achievements and take stock of lessons learned during the current triennium (2001-2003), identify new and emerging global issues, threats and opportunities of relevance to agricultural research for development (ARD) and use the outcome of both exercises to develop a framework for ARD activities required to alleviate the threats and build on the opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to place on record your participation and contribution to this meeting. Indeed your keynote address on the outcomes of the summits and their implication for agriculture adequately addressed our goal of identifying new and emerging issues, threats and opportunities of relevance to ARD. We are currently in the process of using some of the

views you expressed and the recommendations you made in that address as input into our Business Plan for the forthcoming triennium (2004-2006).

I would also like to acknowledge with gratitude the active and fruitful participation of the CGIAR Centres, which played the role of a GFAR stakeholder admirably. Our records show that there were about 40 representatives of the Centres at that meeting, including seven (7) Director-Generals all of whom contributed actively to the events. Participants from the Centres also met as a distinct stakeholder group and made very important recommendations, which will feature prominently in our Business Plan.

We particularly appreciate your endorsement of an advocacy role in ARD as a top priority for GFAR, and your recommendation that GFAR should identify its niche to add value to the global agricultural research systems, as regional and sub-regional fora become increasingly strong and effective. You carefully identified areas in which you have a comparative advantage as a GFAR stakeholder group, such as experience in capacity building at institutional and individual levels, strategic research on broad global issues and capacity to implement complex research and development programmes. This latter, the capacity to implement complex research and development programmes is also the hallmark of Global Partnership Programmes (GPPs) the privileged tool GFAR uses to foster research partnerships, and GFAR promises to take advantage of these strengths.

Finally Mr. Chairman, I would like to acknowledge the financial contribution of a number of Centres such as ILRI, CIAT, IPGRI, and WARDA, for the organization of the meeting. The gesture was a good example of a cost-sharing culture, which we hope will eventually become a standard practice within GFAR.

Thank you.